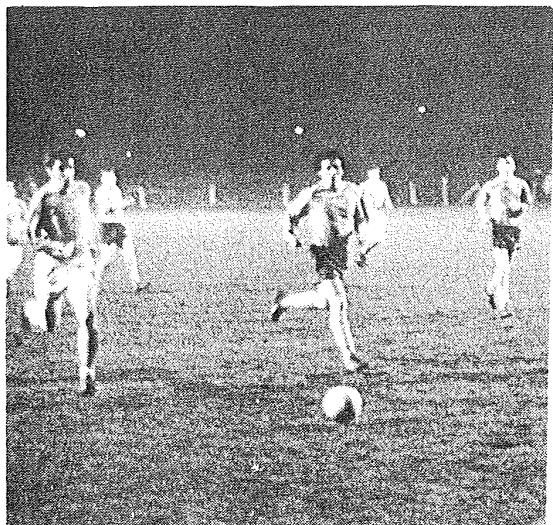


WYCOMBE GO GOAL CRAZY AGAIN IN ANOTHER FLOODLIGHT ROUT



Keith Searle (left) and defender Pete Stone (right) chase a loose ball as it nears the Marlow area.

Marlow 1, Wycombe Wanderers 8

By "RANGER"

SECTION LEADERS Wycombe Wanderers went goal crazy again on Tuesday night this time overwhelming neighbours Marlow at the Alfred Davis Memorial Ground to complete a Premier Floodlight League double. Not since their 9-0 trouncing of Oxford City at Loakes Park had the Isthmians scored so freely nor so regularly.

It is ironic therefore, that Wanderers should welcome back to their ranks Julian Lailey, who had been in that ill-fated Oxford side last December.

Making a return appearance after re-signing for the Blues, he was this time on the more pleasant side of things, and played a major part in Wycombe's latest runaway escapade, until called off midway through the second half.

GOOD AS EVER

His positioning seemed as good as ever it was, although his lack of recent practice after injury was evident.

For 20 minutes Marlow made a game of it and capped their performance up to that point with a well-taken goal by John Willis.

But it ultimately proved the spark that set off the visitors' goal machine.

For after the opening score by Willis, Wanderers hit back immediately and within eight minutes were leading 3-1. By the interval they had increased this to 4-1 and in the second half they simply coasted home to deprive Marlow of their unbeaten home record in the floodlight competition and heavily underline the big difference in standards between Isthmian League football and Athenian League, Division 2.

In the early stages there was almost complete stalemate with neither keeper being called upon to do anything serious for over quarter of an hour.

But with 18 minutes gone, Ron Searle was galvanised into life when he had to make a couple of saves in quick succession from Tony Horseman and Johnny Hutchinson.

IMMEDIATE REPLY

Marlow's reply was immediate. They worked the ball towards Wycombe territory and then Willis burst through a thin line of defenders to extract full advantage from a badly placed and equally badly timed pass-back. Willis, out on the right-wing, cut in and beat Kevin O'Brien with an accurate cross-shot from a fairly acute angle.

Five minutes later Wycombe were level after Horseman out-jumped everyone in the Marlow penalty area to meet a cross from the left and head past Searle. Two minutes after that they took the lead when Keith Searle notched the first of a hat-trick — his third this season — following a powerful drive from the edge of the penalty area.

This furious activity and tempo was maintained by Wanderers as time and again they powered their way through the Marlow back division.

With 28 minutes gone, Searle blasted the ball home from close in to make it 3-1.

Searle and Horseman remained the main Marlow tormentors. Searle jumped over the prostrate Searle when the keeper made a good save at full stretch in the 29th minute, and three minutes after that Horseman was only narrowly short when challenged by Peter Stone, home centre-half, and Searle gathered safely.

OFF THE LINE

In the 35th minute, Peter Sewell kicked a certain-looking score off the line after Searle had gone well out of his charge, but less than 60 seconds later Geoff Anthony netted with a cross-shot from a good 20 yards out.

Four minutes before the interval there was a real let-off for Marlow when Horseman thundered the ball against the bar. Searle, on the right of the goal, met the rebound first time but missed the mark.

Just on the interval, a free kick was awarded to Marlow

when Mick Page was grassed off the edge of the box. Willis took the kick and eventually the ball was pushed home by Stuart Thompson, though the score was disallowed by the referee.

Anthony started the rot second time around ten minutes after the re-start. Horseman followed with his second score in the 65th minute and five minutes after that Searle put his personal stamp of triumph on the match by completing a well deserved hat-trick. Hutchinson netted the final goal nine minutes from time.

This was Marlow's biggest defeat of the season. While it is true that the current Athenian League, Division 2 leaders have an upset over the absence of their leading goal-scorer, Len Markham — injured again Epsom on Saturday — it is unlikely that even his presence would have made much difference to the final outcome.

All that Marlow can be thankful about is that Wanderers were not at full strength. One thing is certain. They themselves will never play quite so badly again in the remainder of their centenary year.

MARLOW: R. Searle; P. Sewell, I. Eyres, C. Reid, P. Stone, D. Richardson, D. Woolley, M. Page, S. Thompson, J. Willis, S. Freeman, Sub.: P. Edmonds.

WYCOMBE WANDERERS: K. O'Brien; I. MacLean, C. Gale, K. Rundle, V. Faulkner, J. Lailey (sub K. Smith), G. Anthony, B. Baker, K. Searle, A. Horseman, J. Hutchinson. Approximate attendance: 900.